

# Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19)

## Los Angeles County Department of Public Health Guidance for Food Markets and Convenience Stores

### Recent Updates:

7/2/20: Additional details provided regarding the use of face coverings.

Public Health is issuing this guidance to assist owners of supermarkets and convenience stores to remain in compliance with the County of Los Angeles Health Officer Order and Appendix A thereby lowering the risk of exposure to both customers and employees. The Order requires food markets and convenience stores to take the following actions:

### Social Distancing / Risk Reduction

- Complete the Protocol for Social Distancing, [Appendix A](#), provide copies to employees, and post a copy at the entrance to the store.
- Enforce social distancing by requiring members of the public to be separated by at least six (6) feet from others, as much as possible. Persons who live in the same household, may stand or move together but must be separated from others by at least six (6) feet.
- Limit contact between customers and cashiers by installing physical barriers such as partitions or plexiglass barriers where maintaining physical distance of six feet is difficult.
- Provide all employees a cloth face covering and require that it be worn at all times when in contact with the public or co-workers. Employees who have been instructed by a medical provider that they are exempt from wearing a face covering due to a medical condition and who have a job involving regular contact with others must wear an alternative, such as a face shield with a drape on the bottom edge.
- [Post a sign](#) indicating that anyone entering the store over the age of two is required to wear a cloth face covering when in the store and enforce the requirement unless customers have a medical condition which prevents them from wearing a face covering.
- Provide public access to handwashing facilities with soap and water or hand sanitizer that contains at least 60 percent alcohol.
- Provide contactless payment systems or sanitize pens, stylus, or keypad after each customer.

### Restaurants Within Food Markets

- Review the [Protocol for Restaurants Opening for On-Site Dining: Appendix I](#).
- Restaurants within grocery stores that do not offer on-site dining may continue to follow the requirements in the Protocol for Social Distancing, Appendix A.

### Grocery Stores and Convenience stores

- Ensure there is a way to sanitize shopping cart and hand basket handles – either by making wipes easily accessible to customers or by having employees manage the process and sanitize between customer use.
- Monitor customer capacity to ensure customer social distancing. This is especially important for wait lines such as check-out counters and lines to enter the store. In areas of high-volume traffic, utilize spacing tools for checks and lines. Put tape on the floor to keep customers adequately spaced.
- Discontinue allowing customer self-service of unpackaged food (e.g. salad bar, soup bar, bulk bins of food, frozen yogurt dispensers).
- Prohibit product sampling.

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- Prohibit the use of reusable cups that customers bring in for beverages.
- Beverage dispensers that are used for self-service of beverages (soda, coffee, etc.) for off-site consumption shall be cleaned and sanitized frequently. A sign is to be posted asking customers not to refill the cup after drinking from it.
- Maintain single-use items such as cups, lids, straws, cutlery, and packaged condiments behind the counter and only provide these upon request.

### Customer Service Considerations

- Recommend designating an employee that will ensure that social distancing requirements of any lines that form inside or outside of the store are met. In areas of high-volume traffic, utilize spacing tools such as tape on the floor to keep customers adequately spaced.
- Ensure that restrooms are fully stocked with soap, single-use towels/hand dryers, and no-touch trash receptacles.
- Provide alcohol-based hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol for customers to use when entering the store and at checkout lanes.
- Consider offering free delivery services for high-risk customers so they can avoid coming into grocery stores.
- Recommend limiting conversations at ordering counters and check-out lines between food employees and customers.
- Customers who bring their own reusable bags should be asked to bag their own groceries or an employee bagging groceries should change gloves after handling customer bags.

### Food Facility Employees

- Check employees daily for illness (either self-check or employer check) and ensure employees stay home when they are sick.
- Employees who appear to be ill upon arrival to work or become sick during the day should be sent home immediately.
- Recommend scheduling employees to the same shift and not shifting employees between shifts to minimize spread in the event that an employee is diagnosed with COVID-19.
- Consider temporarily assigning employees at high risk for serious illness due to COVID-19 to duties that limit their exposure to the public. High risk refers to older adults, pregnant women, and those with compromised immune systems or underlying medical problems.
- Post signs in employee breakrooms reminding workers to maintain social distance.
- Arrange breakrooms and work areas to meet social distancing requirements, to the extent possible.
- Disinfect breakrooms or provide sanitizer wipes for employees to wipe down equipment before use.

### Confirmed COVID-19 Reporting Requirements

Upon notification that an employee has tested positive for COVID-19 or is presumed positive based on symptoms associated with COVID-19, the operator is required to take the following actions:

- Follow Public Health's guidance for [Responding to COVID-19 in the Workplace](#)
- Clean and sanitize the facility according to CDC guidance at <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/clean-disinfect/index.html>



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In the event that the owner, manager, or operator knows of three (3) or more cases of COVID-19 within the workplace within a span of 14 days the employer is required to report this cluster to the Department of Public Health at (888) 397-3993 or (213) 240-7821.

The Department of Public Health's Environmental Health Division will work with the food operator to provide guidance and ensure that all required actions are completed.

### Handwashing Instructions for All Employees

- Ensure employees wash hands and arms with soap and warm water for at least 20 seconds upon first arriving to work, after using the restroom, before and after eating, frequently throughout the day and as specified in the [California Retail Food Code \(CRFC\)](#), Section 113953.3. Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth.
- Recommend assigning an employee at every shift to ensure that handwashing sinks are stocked with soap and paper towels at all times.
- Recommend using gloves appropriately as an additional tool, but it is important to remember that gloves do not replace the need to wash hands and practice good hand hygiene.

### Adhere to Basic Food Safety Practices

- Keep hot food hot (135 °F or above) and cold food cold (41 °F or below).
- Thoroughly cook foods as required in the CRFC.
- Clean and sanitize utensils and equipment at the required frequency outlined in the CRFC.
- Adhere to employee health and hygiene practices—don't work when ill and wash hands frequently and when required as noted above.
- Ensure all food and food ingredients are from an approved food source.

### Enhanced Cleaning Practices

- Designate employees to clean and disinfect all "high-touch" surfaces such as serving counters, tabletops, refrigeration doors handles, cash register counters, credit card machines, bathroom fixtures, toilets, doorknobs, trash cans, and phones, frequently.
- Use an Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)-registered product that cleans (removes germs) and disinfects (kills germs). Always follow the instructions on the labels of cleaning products and disinfectants.

### Effective Disinfectants (For use on non-food contact surfaces)

- To make a bleach solution, mix 4 teaspoons of bleach to 1 quart (4 cups) of water. For a larger supply, add 1/3 cup of bleach to 1 gallon (16 cups) of water. Use the solution within 20 minutes.
- Other EPA-approved disinfectants may be used if they are effective against Coronaviruses. Consumers may contact the "1-800" number on the product label for its effectiveness against "COVID-19".

### Proper Handling of Disinfectants, Items, and Waste

- Use chemicals in a well-ventilated area.
- Avoid mixing incompatible chemicals (read label).
- Prevent chemical contact with food during cleaning.
- Manage waste safely and dispose in a secure trash container.

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- Store chemicals in an approved manner.

For more information on preventing a communicable illness in a food facility setting, contact Consultative Services at (888) 700-9995. For more information on COVID-19, visit <http://publichealth.lacounty.gov>.

